Met Office

NEWS

Met Office employee becomes world's first digital accessibility apprenticeship graduate

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Adam Keane has made history as the first person to complete an apprenticeship in Digital Accessibility in the world, marking a pioneering achievement for the Met Office, the Civil Service, and global accessibility standards.

Adam who joined the Met Office in September 2022 as a Specialist Apprentice in Digital Accessibility, officially completed the apprenticeship programme this month, achieving a Distinction. He now continues his career at the Met Office, applying his specialist skills to ensure digital services are accessible to all.

Weather and climate information is important for everyone, playing a role in keeping people safe. Work in this area involves ensuring that information on all of our platforms, such as website, app and social media, can be accessed and understood by the widest possible audience, regardless of whether people have a visual, hearing, speech, motor, cognitive or other combination of impairments.

Adam, who works at the Met Office HQ in Devon, said: "For the past two years, I've embarked on an apprenticeship to become a Digital Accessibility Specialist. This is the first apprenticeship of its type anywhere in the world and the Met Office was the first department within the Civil Service to offer an apprenticeship of this type. I feel immensely proud to have completed it.

"It's too early to speculate what the legacy of this apprenticeship will be, but I hope I'm the first of many individuals whose expertise in the field arises through an apprenticeship. I want to embed accessibility into all we do at the Met Office. The digital accessibility work we do matters and is a little thing that can make a huge difference."

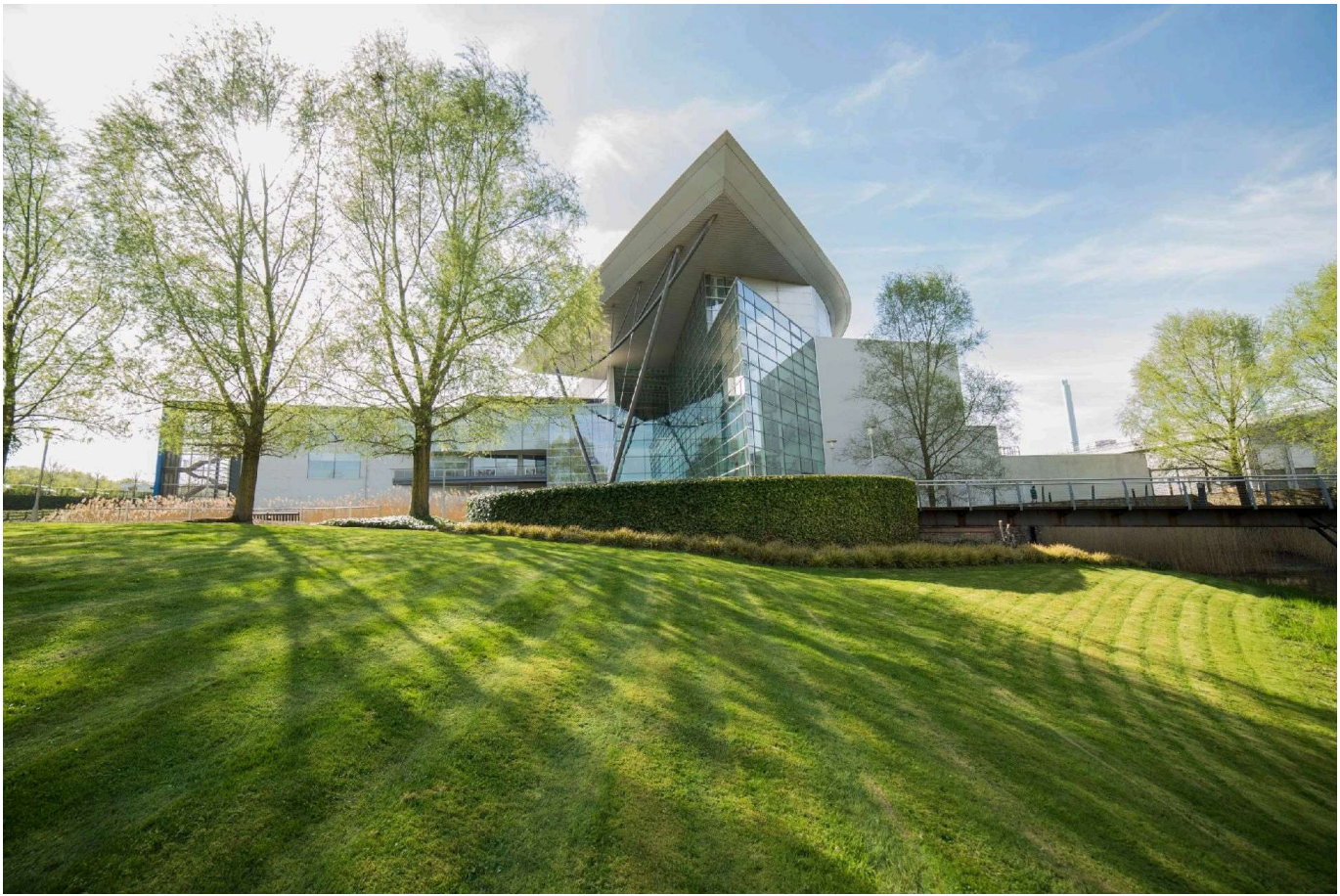
During his apprenticeship, Adam has been given the chance to delve into digital accessibility, looking at how the Met Office can make its critical weather services and world-leading climate science accessible to all. He has helped to demonstrate why digital accessibility matters, as well as providing colleagues with practical tips on how they can further consider accessibility in their work.

The use of colour to convey information for example, is an area he has worked on, explaining: “One of my biggest takeaways from the apprenticeship has been an appreciation of the diverse ways human beings perceive and engage with digital technology. For example, for some people, a granny smith apple and a butter cup are perceived as the same colour. Understanding this means that we should radically change how colour is used to convey information so that where colour is used to convey meaning, it also has an additional visual cue, such as a symbol.”

Adam’s contributions have already had significant impact. He has conducted live review sessions, embedded accessibility requirements into key organisational processes, and improved recruitment systems to create a more inclusive candidate pool. He also co-founded the Digital Accessibility Community of Practice, to share best practices across the organisation.

Professor Penny Endersby, Chief Executive of the Met Office, said: "Adam has made a strong impact from his first days in the Met Office: warm congratulations to him for passing his apprenticeship with Distinction. Met Office information helps people all over the UK make better decisions to stay safe and thrive, and it’s essential that that information is available to everyone who wants it in a form they can use. We’ve made real strides in the accessibility of our information both inside the Met Office and for the general public, and Adam has been at the heart of that effort.”

The Met Office provides a range of early career opportunities, such as work experience, apprenticeships, industrial placements and graduate positions.



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